


THE ORATORY, SONGS, LEGENDS, AND FOLK- TALES OF THE MALAGASY.

BY THE REV. JAMES SIBREE, JUNIOR.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

N the second volume of the *Folk-Lore Record* (pp. 19-46) an attempt was made to describe a number of the curious ideas and superstitions which are found amongst the various tribes of people inhabiting the great island of Madagascar ; showing some of the strange notions held with regard to animals, both real and fabulous, trees and plants, lucky and unlucky days and times, ordeals, &c. &c.* It was, however, mentioned that in addition to these illustrations of folk-lore, a considerable number of folk-tales had recently been brought to light, and that these, from their variety and the length of many of them, could only be properly treated in a separate form. Our principal object, therefore, is now to try and put a few of these Malagasy tales into an English dress, giving such notes and explanations as may be necessary to elucidate points which would otherwise be obscure. We shall also give selections from other native productions—fables, games, songs, and nursery tales, as well as illustrations of the imaginative cast of the Malagasy mind as evinced in their public speeches and oratory, with its wealth of imagery and illustration.

Even so recently as five or six years ago it would have been impossible to write much on these subjects, because the materials did not then exist in any collected form. It is only within this very recent period that the attention of European missionaries residing in Madagascar has been directed to the subject of native folk-lore ; but as soon as research in this direction was commenced we were astonished at the abundance of material available in all parts of

* A short supplementary paper was also given on the same subject in the fourth vol. of the *Folk-Lore Record*, pp. 46-51.

the country to which we had access. It may be thought strange, perhaps, that although many of us have been resident in Madagascar for fourteen or fifteen years, such tales and legends should have remained so long unknown to us. The explanation of this is, that not only have the needs of the people, and the consequent demands upon our time and energies, been exceptionally great since the destruction of the idols in the central provinces at the close of 1869, but also that many of these stories being connected more or less with the old idolatrous state of society then passing away, the people were somewhat ashamed of them, and probably thought that we should think them unworthy of serious attention. As soon, however, as it was seen that we considered them to possess interest, it became comparatively easy to obtain a good many of these relics of primeval times. It must be borne in mind that the Malagasy had no written language before mission work was commenced by the London Missionary Society in the interior of Madagascar about sixty years ago. They had, therefore, no books, or manuscripts, or inscriptions, so that all the "unwritten literature"—if we may so call it—which has recently come to light, in the shape of proverbs, oratorical adornments of speech, songs, legends, nursery stories, and folk-tales, has been preserved, up to about five years ago, solely in MS. or tradition.

The most valuable contribution to our knowledge of Malagasy Folk-tales has been made by a learned member of the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, the Rev. Louis Dahle, who published in the early part of 1877 a volume of 457 pages, small octavo, entitled *Specimens of Malagasy Folk-lore*. This was printed at the Press of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association at Antanànarivo, and dedicated to the memory of the late Dr. W. H. J. Bleek, of Cape Town, so well known for his laborious investigations into South African languages and literature. Except the preface and title-page, this volume is entirely in Malagasy, and is therefore as yet a sealed book to those who are unacquainted with the language in which it is written.

In the same year (1877) several Europeans residing at Antanànarivo, chiefly those connected with the L. M. S. Mission, formed a little society for the purpose of collecting and printing the folk-lore of Madagascar. Each member was expected to forward to the publisher, from time to time, any specimens of the native literature possessing interest, that might come under his notice, such as tales, fables and allegories, proverbs, public speeches, &c. Seven numbers of the

publications of this society were printed at somewhat irregular intervals, each number consisting of twenty-four pages 12mo. For some reason, unknown to myself, the printing of this work was discontinued, and has not yet been resumed, although it is understood that there is still a considerable amount of material available for use in MS. Much as this is to be regretted, the 168 pages already in print are most valuable and interesting, as I hope to show by numerous extracts. In addition to the subjects already mentioned, the Malagasy Folk-lore Society's publications contain specimens of native riddles, and of rhymes which are a species of mnemonics, intended to aid in the learning of the numbers in arithmetic.

These introductory remarks would not be complete without a few words in addition, describing what had been previously done by two or three other missionaries in Madagascar, in a somewhat similar direction to folk-lore studies properly so called. In the year 1871 my friends, the Rev. W. E. Cousins and Mr. J. Parrett, published a small volume of 76 pp., containing 1477 Malagasy proverbs, a branch of native traditional wisdom in which the language is very rich. Owing to our increased knowledge since 1871, this collection of proverbs might now be very greatly enlarged; it could probably be doubled or nearly trebled in size. It has been justly remarked that "the proverbial sayings [of the Malagasy] present the fullest exhibition of the grade of mind among the people, both intellectually and morally."

Two years later, Mr. Cousins published another small volume of 58 pp., containing twenty-six *Kabàry* or royal and other speeches and proclamations, dating from 1787 to 1872. These public addresses are not only of considerable interest as historical documents, but they have a great value as preserving archaic words and obsolete or obsolescent forms of construction, and thus throwing important light upon the language. "This," remarks the Rev. D. Griffiths, who, with the Rev. D. Jones, did the chief work of reducing the Malagasy tongue to a systematic written form, "has reached its present state of excellence merely by ordinary conversation, speeches in the public assemblies (*i.e.* *Kabàry*), and pleadings in the courts of justice."

Three years later still (in 1876), Mr. Cousins issued another small volume of 56 pp., containing about a score native accounts of Malagasy customs, including the circumcision observances, the administration of the Tangéna poison-ordeal, marriage and burial ceremonies,

and those connected with the New Year's festival, &c. Use has been made of many of these in some of the chapters in the writer's book, *The Great African Island* (Trübner, 1880).

An intelligent native officer named Rabézàndrina published in 1875 a pamphlet of 42 pp., giving a complete version of a favourite Malagasy story, the history of two rogues named Ikòtofétsy and Imàhakà, together with a shorter story. The former of these native tales was rendered into English by the late Mr. James Cameron, of the L. M. S. Mission, and was published in 1871, in the *Cape Magazine*, issued at Cape Town; and within the last two or three years, Miss Cameron, daughter of the gentleman just mentioned, has contributed to the same magazine English renderings of about half-a-dozen of the tales given in Mr. Dahle's collection.

Translations into English of about a dozen Malagasy folk-tales have been made by the Rev. J. Richardson, also of the L. M. S. Mission, and were published in the 1877 and 1878 numbers of the *Antanànarivo Annual*; but as the circulation of this magazine is chiefly confined to those resident in or closely connected with Madagascar, probably very few people have seen these Malagasy stories. Two or three specimens of the fables and folk-tales may be found in some other publications: in Copland's *History of the Island of Madagascar* (1822), in Ellis's much more valuable and complete *History* (1838), in Mr. E. Baker's *Outline of a Grammar of the Malagasy Language* (1845), and in some papers entitled, "Madagascar à Vol d'Oiseau," in the *Tour du Monde* (x. liv. 247, 248, 249), and subsequently translated into English in *Illustrated Travels*, vol. i. These, I believe, comprise all that is at present available in an English form of Malagasy folk-tales, songs, and fables.

Mention should also be made of a work in Malagasy which was printed at the Jesuit mission press at Antanànarivo five or six years ago. This was the first volume of a *History of the Kings of Imérina* (the central province of Madagascar), derived from native sources, manuscripts written during the last few years, and traditions. This book gives, in addition to the history of the country, a considerable amount of information about the native customs as they are supposed to have successively arisen from the earliest periods, including not a little folk-lore, the beliefs as to supposed supernatural beings, divination, witchcraft, the idols, &c. The book contains 258 pages, and it is intimated at the close that three other volumes will complete

the work, but nothing additional has yet (1882) been issued. Several articles containing information on folk-lore are also included in the contents of a Malagasy work entitled *Isan-kerin-taona*, or "Annual," but of which only two volumes (for 1876 and 1877) were published at the Friends' Mission press in Antanànarivo.

This historical introduction to the subject will indicate what has been done hitherto to make Malagasy folk-lore accessible to students, and how little is yet to be found translated into English, although a considerable amount is now printed from the native accounts, obtained either orally or in manuscript.

In this paper large use will be made of Mr. Dahle's collections, partly because hardly any of these have yet been translated, and also because his book, although professing only to give "specimens" of Malagasy folk-lore, has a completeness of its own, as it includes examples of all the branches of this kind of literature, as well as some from all the chief provinces of the country.

Mr. Dahle says of his work that it is restricted to branches of folk-lore of which hardly anything has yet been published, viz. adages, riddles and conundrums, songs, oratorical flourishes of speech, children's plays, bogey stories, and tales and fables. It does not include any strictly historical traditions, many of which are available; and although only printed for private circulation, Mr. Dahle thought it right to omit a good many pieces containing impure expressions and allusions, by which omissions the collection has been reduced very considerably. Whatever is found in the book is given full and unchanged, nothing being added by the editor but the descriptive headings. Mr. Dahle notes that many of the tales occur in different forms in different provinces, and that, had space allowed, other "variants" might have been added to those which are given in the work. He also says that, although care has been taken to include only purely native productions, it is possible that some of the elements contained in a few of them may have originated from or at least have been influenced by foreigners to a certain extent. Some of the tales, he remarks, "have a rather suspicious Oriental colour; while the curious ideas in some of them, the fine and florid, often very obscure, language of others, and the interesting form of not a few of the poetical pieces (*e.g.* the often very prominent *parallelisms* so characteristic of Oriental, and especially Hebrew, poetry), must claim the attention of many who are able to read them in the original."

Nothing further need be added to these introductory remarks except to note that in addition to their value in other ways, this collection of folk-lore and folk-tales is of considerable use as throwing light upon the Malagasy language, by preserving numerous words and idioms which are seldom or never heard in other connections. Should we eventually be able to procure the variants of many of the chief stories from all the provinces of the island, the service which folk-tales will render in studying the various dialects of Malagasy can hardly be over-rated.*

CHAPTER I.

ORATORY AND FIGURES OF SPEECH.

The first of the nine sections into which Mr. Dahle's book is divided treats of *Hain-tény làvalàva*, lit. "Somewhat lengthy clever speeches," i.e., Oratorical Flourishes and Ornaments of Speech, which are occasionally expanded into an allegory. As with many peoples of lively imagination, but who have had no literature, the Malagasy are, as a rule, ready and fluent speakers, and many of them have considerable oratorical powers. The native language is pleasant and musical in its sounds, full of vowels and liquids, and free from all harsh and guttural utterances; and the mental habits of the people induce a great amount of illustration in their ordinary speech, which is full of proverbs and similes. In their more formal and public addresses these are also found in abundance, as well as allegories, fables, and figures derived largely from natural objects.

* I must here note that, this paper being written in England, the translations from these Malagasy productions are made at some disadvantage, as I have been unable to get any help from native friends. As many of the words used in them are obsolete they are not familiar to me, and numbers of them are not found in our dictionary, so that occasionally I have been at a loss for the exact meaning of a passage; and in many more instances, although the literal meaning of the words is plain enough, there is some figurative use of them, or some obscure allusion, which requires help from a native Malagasy to render the whole perfectly clear. I have done my best, but I am very conscious how many defects there are in these translations, which will be still more obvious to those who are living in Madagascar.

Here is one of the first examples, which is entitled

The Desolate (one) forsaken by Friends.

I (am) a straggling piece of peel from the young shoots of the plantain tree; but when I still had possessions, while I still was in happy circumstances, then I was loved by both father's and mother's relations. When I spake, they were shamefaced; when I admonished, they submitted; so that I was to father's relatives their protection* and glory, and to mother's relatives the wide-sheltering sunshade; and was to them (as) the calf born in the summer,† both amusement and wealth, of whom they said: This one is the great *voàra* (a species of *ficus*), ornament of the field; this the great house, adornment of the town; this is protection, this is glory, this is splendour, this is boasting; this will preserve the memory of the dead, for (he is as) wide-spreading grass in the deserted village, and succeeding his fathers. Yes, they thought me a memorial stone set up, and I was (received) both with shoutings and acclamation.‡

Nevertheless I am (but) a straggling piece of peel from the shoots of the plantain tree; and now I am left spent and desolate, and having nothing, and hated by father's family, and cast off by mother's relations; and considered by them but a stone on which things are dried in the sun, and, when the day becomes cloudy, kicked away. Yes, O people, O good folks, for while I admonish you I also reproach myself, for I am both reproached and openly ashamed. Therefore, hark ye, take good care of property; for when property is gone, gone is adornment; and the lean ox is not licked by its fellows, and the desolate person is not loved. So do not waste the rice, for those whose planting-rice is gone, and who have to enter into the fellow-wife's house, are in sad case. Do not trample on my cloth, for I cannot arrange the cotton to weave another, and it is ill having rags to wear in the winter.

It will be observed how large a number of figures there is in these few sentences; some of the allusions are explained in foot-notes, but other points are somewhat obscure to those unacquainted with the habits and customs of the Malagasy.

* The word thus translated means, literally, a post set up as a protection to taboo a house or piece of ground.

† That is, in the rainy season, when there is plenty of fresh pasture.

‡ Memorial stones are largely used in the central provinces, and consist of massive monoliths erected with immense labour and expense.

Many of the shorter of these "flowers of oratory" have the sententious forms of the proverbs; and others take the shape of a conversation between imaginary persons, whose names often afford a key to the sentiments they express. The language readily lends itself to such coinage of names; half a-dozen prefixes being joined to words or short sentences immediately turn them into proper names, each appropriate for the speakers, whether male or female, old or young, &c.

Very frequent allusions are made to fidelity in friendship, which is a strongly-marked feature of the Malagasy character, as shown by the practice of brotherhood-by-blood covenants. Here is an example, entitled

Mutual Love.

Let us two, O friend, never separate upon the high mountain, nor part upon the lofty rock, nor leave each other on the wide-spread plain. For, alas! that this narrow valley should part such loving ones as we are; for thou wilt be hidden, and I shall be unseen; so farewell until we meet again; for thou wilt advance and go home, and I shall return to remain; for if thou, the traveller, shouldst not be sad, much less should I, the one left. I am a child left by its companions, and playing with dust* all alone; but still, should I not be utterly weak and given up to folly, if I blamed my friend for going home?

Some of the pieces remind us of the English nursery rhymes of the type of the "Old woman who could not get home to get her husband's supper ready"; as is the following:—

The Bird who could find no Place to lay her Eggs.

I (sought to) lay, says the bird, upon high tree.† The high tree was blown by the wind; the wind was stopped by the hill; the hill was burrowed by the rat; the rat was food for the dog; the dog was controlled by the man; the man was conquered by the spear; the spear was conquered by the rock; the rock was overflowed by the water; the water was crossed by little red-eye (a small bird).

Several of the pieces in this section of the book refer to divorce,

* The common amusement of native children, equivalent to the "mud pies" of English children.

† Here personified by the addition of the personal prefix *Ra*, and the word for tree meaning, strictly, the lofty = the lofty one.

and to the attempts often made to bring back to the husband a wife who had been put away. This facility of divorce and the general looseness of the marriage relation is one of the least pleasing features of Malagasy society; the power of divorce being usually in the husband's hands, and being often exercised for the most trivial reasons, and effected in an absurdly easy fashion. It will be seen, however, in the following piece, that the woman was often quite equal to her husband in power of repartee, and could speak with stinging sarcasm of his fickle conduct and heartlessness.

Sending home a divorced Wife.

Whereaway, O pair of bluebirds? are you going east or going west? If to the west, I will bind you hand and foot to tell to Rabàrimàso that for a whole year and throughout seven months thy friend has not bathed in warm water, but tears longing for thee have been his bath. Therefore say: May you live, says *Ratsàrahòbitsimbahofàty** [that is, the husband], for thou art not forgotten by him, though the distance be great and though the streams be in flood. And when *Rafàraélanàndeférana* [Mrs. Long-enduring], heard that, she said: "Upon my word, I am astonished at thee, Andriamatòà [a term of respect to an elderly man or eldest son]: when you married me, you thought the road was not big enough for me, but when you divorced me you considered me a mere nothing; when you asked for me, you spread out like the broad roof of the house, but when you put me away you folded up like its gable. So enough of that, Andriamatòà," &c.

And so she proceeds to pile up figure upon figure to illustrate his ill-treatment of her; telling him, "Perhaps you think me a poor little locust left by its companions, which can be caught by anyone having a hand." "A protection," she tells him, "can be found from the rain by sewing together the mat umbrellas, but it is love that is spent, and love that is scattered, and love that has removed, and the cut ends of the threads are not to be joined together."† To all this the husband rejoins: "Unfortunate that I am, Rafàra, wife beloved, I sent unfit persons; to get you home were they sent, nevertheless to keep us separate is what they have accomplished; so come home then, Rafàra, for our children are sad, the house is desolate, the rice fields are turned into

* There is some significance in this long name, but it is not quite clear to me from its literal meaning.

† Referring to weaving cloth.

a marsh," &c. Whether these efforts were successful is left to conjecture; one may hope that after such moving appeals the injured and indignant wife came back to her family; especially since they are followed by this additional address of the husband to the people at large to help him out of his difficulty :—

Second Speech of Ratsàrahòby.

Help me, good folks, for the fowl I had all but caught has flown off into the long grass, and the bird I had almost obtained for rearing has been carried off by the flood, and the bull I should have obtained for fighting has escaped to the top of the high mountain. So help me, good people, and say thus to Rafàra : (I) will be humble in spirit without obstinacy, and will follow what you have done; for if thou art as the storm destroying the rice, let me be the tree-trunk plucked up. And if thou art as hail destroying the rice, let me be the wide field on which it is scattered. And if thou art as the thunderbolt falling to the earth, let me be the rock on which it dances. And if thou art as the whirlwind blinding the eyes, let me be the lake, substitute for eyes. Because gone is my obstinacy, for gentleness only remains, for there is no support of life, since Rafàra is the support of life; so send me home Rafàra, lest I become a fool.

In Malagasy philosophy, as in that of all nations, there occurs frequent mention of life and its shortness; and, in the absence of any certainty as to a future life, a sentiment somewhat parallel to the old heathen saying, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," as thus:—

Take your fill of Pleasure while you live.

O ye prosperous people, O ye well-to-do folks, take your fill of pleasure while you live; for when dead and come to the "stone with the little mouth" [the native tombs, among the Hova, are made of large undressed slabs of basalt rock, in one of which a small entrance is cut] it is not to return the same day, but to stop there to sleep;* it is not to visit only, but to remain. The covering-stone† is what presses down over one, the red earth is above the breast, a temporary roof and tent walls surround one; ‡ no turning round, no rising up.

* Here is a play upon native words (*mòdi-màndry*) which are used alike for sleeping away from home for a night and also for dying.

† The four stones forming the sides of the Hova tombs are covered in by one huge slab, called the *Ràngolàhy*.

‡ Referring to the native customs at a funeral, and in making a new tomb.

Another piece speaks of

Things here on Earth not enduring;

and after referring to the different leaves, fruit, and flowers of various trees, proceeds to moralize thus :—

Thou dost not perhaps remember the sayings of the ancestors : Consider, O young folks, your stay here on the earth, for the trees grow only, but are not joined together, for if they were they would reach the skies. But it is not thus, for they have their time of springing, and of growing, and of being cut down. And just so with men : to them come prosperous days and days of misfortune ; they have their days of youth, and of old age, and of death ; but those who die happy and in heaven follow Impòina* and Radàma,* they are the fortunate ones.

A feature in native ideas is shown by another piece, which enforces the doctrine that “ It is better to die than to suffer affliction.”

Many of the compositions in this section of the book are in praise of wisdom and denunciation of folly ; in fact no people perhaps are more ready to give and receive good advice than are the Malagasy. It is universally recognised as the privilege of all to give admonition to others, even to those highest in rank, if it is administered in the form of advice or *ànatra*. There are a great many references to animals in these admonitions ; almost every bird known to the Malagasy is used as a simile, and its habits are described with great accuracy ; so that a complete collection of all the references to the animal life of Madagascar found in the proverbs and fables would throw no little light upon the fauna of the island.

Here is a curious piece in the form of a dialogue, exhorting those in sorrow not to hide it from their friends :

The Bereaved one questioned and attempting to hide (Sorrow.)

Who is that person before thee?

I know not, for I did not overtake him.

Who is yonder person behind thee?

I know not, for he did not overtake me.

Why then are you so erect ?

I am not erect, but chanced to rise.

* These are names of Hova sovereigns: the first died in 1810, the second in 1828.

Why then do you sob so?

I am not sobbing, but merely breathing.

Why are you as if beside yourself?

I am not beside myself, but am thinking.

Why are you as if weeping?

I am not weeping, but have got dust in my eye.

Why are you sighing?

I am not sighing, but have a cold.

Why are you wobegone?

I do not wish to appear wobegone, but my child is dead! Then she bursts into a flood of tears and makes all the people sorry.*

Consider well! do not hide your calamity.

A fatalistic sentiment appears in the following, entitled

To Die is not to be avoided.

The guinea-fowl when flying departs not from the wood, nor, when hiding, from the earth, and the *fanôro* shrub dies on the ground. All the hairs of the head cannot bind death, and tears cannot hold him; therefore give up the dead, for the earth is the forsaking-place of the beloved ones, the dwelling of the living, the home when dead.

Here is a bit of "tall talk," in which the powers of nature are invoked to help against an enemy. It should be noted that all the natural objects mentioned are personified by adding to them the personal prefix *Ra-*, which can hardly be paralleled in English by our prefixes Mr. or Mrs. &c. without a somewhat comic effect, which is quite absent in the Malagasy:—

The far-reaching power of the Imagination.

The sun is indeed my father, the moon is my mother, the stars are but my subjects; Bétsimitàtatra [the great rice plain west of Antanànarivo] is my rice plot, the meteors are my guns, and the thunderbolts are my cannon, with which I will fire at those who hate me.

Here is another example of the same habit of boasting of one's own power, in the form of a dialogue between two men:—

* When a death occurs in any house, the relatives and friends assemble in large numbers to condole with the family, to *mitsàpa àlahélo*, i.e., to "touch sorrow."

Each boasting.

Says Rafàralàhy [*i.e.* last male, or youngest son]: "Art thou Andrianàivo, who art child of Naméhana: rising up, eating the àviàvy * (fruit), and when stooping eating amòutana * (fruit); at evening playing with citrons, and in the morning bowling lemons?" "Just so." Then says Andrianàivo [middle male]: "Art thou Rafàralàhy, who art child of Iarivo: when poor, having money in the mouth, and when rich, not sought for by creditors; riding on horseback, yet not calumniated; and carried in a palanquin, yet not abused?" "Just so."

A careful study of these Malagasy sayings, together with the native proverbs, throws considerable light upon the notions of the people as regards morals. Many of them contain much good counsel as to the avoidance of various vices and follies, together with rebukes of the loose native habits as regards marriage; for example, there is one against forsaking one's wife to marry a richer one! Then we have warnings against bad company, gluttony, dishonesty, and prodigality, and very many against lying and liars. The good and the evil man are compared, patience under misfortune is commended, and we are cautioned against trusting in appearances in the following references to the habits of the crocodile, the most dreaded of all the animals inhabiting Madagascar:—

The Slow-going one is to be feared.

A red male crocodile going down the Ikiòpa with the stream, its sly advance unheard, its movements unobserved, lying still in the pools without diving, and lying in the water without paddling. So then, say I, good folks, perhaps the old fellow [lit. "your elder brother"] is dead, and therefore does not show up, or is somehow prevented and so does not return.

But the people say: Thou art indeed childish and dost not perhaps consider that the crocodile, when he lies in the deep pools and does not dive, there is the warm place where he sleeps; and when he lies still in the water, not moving a foot, that there is the place where he

* These are both fine trees, very common in the higher regions of Madagascar; they are species of *ficus*, both bearing edible, though not very palatable, fruit.

obtains his food. So let that teach you that the old fellow is not dead by any means, but is still looking after business.

This reference to the crocodile is but one out of scores of passages noticing the habits of animals in these pieces, and which reveal, as already remarked, a most accurate knowledge of their habits. In one of them the eels in the lake Itasy are represented as in council, expressing their disappointment that a stone breakwater, made to prevent a too great rush of water out of the lake, has not proved a place for their greater enjoyment, but where they may more easily be caught. In another piece the different cries and habits of various birds are compared, and their unfitness for carrying a message; all of them but one, the *vòrondréo* (*Leptosoma discolor*), which has a loud distinct cry; while as to the others, the *fìtatra* (a stonechat, *Pratincola sybilla*) would be always looking for food, the *sòŷ* (a species of *Nectarinia*) would be too melancholy, and the *fòdy* (the cardinal-bird, *Foudia Madagascariensis*), which goes in flocks, would always be flying off with its companions.

This observation of bird life is also illustrated in a short piece which enforces the familiar English household maxim that

Everything has its Place.

The whitebird (a species of egret, which feeds on the flies and parasites of cattle) does not leave the oxen, the sandpiper does not forsake the ford, the hawk does not depart from the tree, the valley is the dwelling of the mosquito, the mountain is the home of the mist, the water holes are the lair of the crocodile. And the sovereign is the depository (lit. "resting-place") of the law, and the people the depository of good sense.

Equally numerous are the allusions to the various trees and plants and their qualities, and the way in which they illustrate human weaknesses and follies.

Love of children is a marked feature in these native sayings. They are called "the fat (that is, the best) of one's life" (*ménaky ny aina*), and are said to be "loved like one's self," &c. Equally distinct is the love of home and of one's native place: "Yonder road," says one piece, "is dreary and difficult, twisting about here and there, but for all that it is the way leading to the door of the house of father and mother."

Still more fully and pathetically is this warm family affection

expressed in the following lament of a captive taken in war, with which we may conclude this division of the subject :

Oh that I could see Father and Mother !

Where away yonder, O bird, art thou speeding away by night ?
Hast thou lost in the game, or art thou fined, that thou thus hastest away ?

Neither in gaming have I lost, nor a fine do I dread ; but the road to be travelled I sweep over, and in the place of enjoyment do I rest.

Ah, just so, O bird, would that I also were a bird and could fly, that I might go yonder at the top of the high tree to look over and see father and mother, lest they should be dead, lest they should be ill ; long have we been separated ; for we are held in bondage by the people, and they are persecuted with gun and spear. We are slaves here in Imérina (the central province and home of the dominant Hova tribe) ; manure is our friend, the spade is our brother by blood, and the basket is our companion.* Our necks wait for the wooden collar, our backs await the irons, and our feet the fetters. And father and mother sigh out their lives at Vòhibé ; so salutation (lit. " may they live ") until we meet again, for long has been our separation.

Most of the principal towns and villages in Imérina are noted for some circumstance or other, either in their natural position, or their productions, or the disposition of the people, as clever, covetous, or brave, &c. This is sometimes expressed in stinging proverbs, which are quoted by their neighbours with great gusto, and are heard with equal chagrin by the unfortunate objects of these satirical *bon-mots*. Thus the people of Ambòhipéno are held up to scorn in the saying : " The arums of Ambòhipéno : they had rather let them rot than give one to a neighbour."

* Alluding to the constant work in the rice fields done by the slaves, in digging, carrying manure in baskets, &c.

(To be continued.)